

Euphorbia abyssinica

Euphorbiaceae

Indigenous

Ar: *Shajaret al sim*

Bl: *Kulankala*

Tg: *Kolqual*

Tr: *Kulunqual*

Ecology: A spiny tree euphorbia which grows in moist montane forest, humid woodlands and scrub savannah only in Somalia, the Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. In Eritrea, it is abundant in the central highlands and on the eastern and western escarpments, e.g. around Mehlab, between Segenaiti and Mai-seraw, around Endadeko, Adi-tekelezan, Nakfa, Areza and in the Anseba valley.

Uses: Firewood, **timber** (roofing, matches, boxes, sticks, local tables, wooden saddles), live fence.

Description: A succulent **leafless tree** up to 10 m high, the crown almost flattened. The **thick main trunk**, woody with age, usually has **more than 5 angles** or ribs, **often 8-sided**. The mass of upturned green branches has taken over the function of leaves. **The 3-8 thick ribs may be winged** and the stems are narrowed or constricted at intervals making segments. Along the ribs are **small rounded shields from which grow pairs of straight spines, to 1 cm**, leaves and flowers. LEAVES: Develop only on seedlings, soon falling, later only scales. FLOWERS: In crowded groups at the tips of branches, each with **5 bright yellow glands**. FRUIT: Capsules, **large and rounded when fresh, to 2 cm across**, about 1 cm high, stalked, green at first then deep red with white lines (*E. candelabrum* smaller, more deeply lobed). The 3-part capsule dries to release small plain grey seeds.

Propagation: Cuttings.

Seed:

treatment:

storage:

Management:

Remarks: The soft yellow wood is suitable for roofing as well as matches, boxes, etc. There is considerable variation between northern and southern populations of *E. abyssinica*. This species closely resembles *E. candelabrum* but the latter normally grows below 1,700 m. If the latex gets into the eyes it can cause blindness.

